



## I AM NAVY MEDICINE: HOSPITAL CORPSMAN 1ST CLASS BRANDON VARGO

With a career expanding 18 years, Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Brandon Vargo, From Cass City, Mich., now serves as Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) Bremerton's leading petty officer for the hospital's career counseling team.

In that 18 years the Cass City High School and Craven Community College graduate has spent 15 of them in Navy Medicine.

"I came into the Navy in a total different direction than I am now," said Vargo. "I originally came into the Navy through the nuclear training pipeline but after "A" school and power school I just knew I wasn't where I belonged."

He initially joined the Navy to see the world and wanted to stay Navy, but was not happy being in the nuclear community. He then jumped on the opportunity to change jobs as soon as the option arose.

"I was at a cross roads and not quite sure what I was going to do," he recalls. "That's when I was able to train with many different ratings. It was during some on the job training at Naval Hospital Groton, that I was first introduced to Navy Medicine."

Vargo went to Hospital Corpsman "A" school and then to train as a surgical technician before reporting to Naval Hospital Cherry Point, N.C., saying, "From there, that's where the real story began."

Seeing the world is exactly what he has done, and continues to do. Since joining the Navy Medicine community, Vargo has been either stationed or visited nine states across the U.S. Ill., S.C., N.Y., Conn., Va., N.C., Calif., Hawaii, and Wash – and during deployment visited Hong Kong, Dubai and Bahrain.

He mentioned his time aboard the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) being a notable tour of great professional achievement.

“I was on the shipboard surgical trauma training team, completed the helicopter underwater escape training, did multiple mass casualty drills, did a West Pacific deployment, and got triple qualified all as a member of Fleet Surgical Team 1,” he said.

Tripled qualified refers to Vargo earning his enlisted surface, air, and information warfare specialist devices.

Even with all of the above accomplishments, when asked Vargo said the best part of his Navy Medicine career is, “fulfilling the duties of a command career counselor where your days are long, the job is tedious, and it’s never boring.”

Vargo was hand selected as command career counselor based off his past performance. So he dropped his surgical technician designation to work full time helping Sailors at NMRTC Bremerton navigate their careers with such duties as coordinating reenlistments, handling contract extensions, and navigating the selection process for duty assignment orders.

To sum up his long career in one sentence, Vargo said, “It’s been quite an experience and the greatest part was being able to interact and affect so many people’s lives both from a patient care aspect and a Navy leader aspect.”